

## **REMARKS**

Claims 11, 13-17, 33, and 35-38 remain pending.

The claims have been amended to be limited (again) to a feature of the embodiment of Fig. 2 where the occurrence of the special symbol (shown in the center position) causes adjacent symbols in the center column to be converted to the same special symbol. Since any single pay line (either straight or bent) only cuts across a particular reel once, the converted symbols in a single column are in different pay lines.

The examiner rejected the claims under 35 USC 112 since the previous amendment did not limit the changed symbols to adjacent symbols. The independent Claims 11 and 33 have been amended to limit the changed symbols to adjacent symbols in the same column as the special symbol. Such a limitation was previously in the claims prior to September 5, 2007.

The examiner combined O'Halloran (US Pat. 6,439,993) and Bennett (US Pat. 6,251,013) to reject all claims as being obvious.

In O'Halloran, the appearance of a wild card symbol (an "@" symbol) only causes one or more other symbols on the same pay line to be converted to the wild symbol (see Figs. 3-5 and col. 3, lines 7-9). Even if the pay lines are bent, a single pay line does not pass twice through a single reel. Each of O'Halloran's claims is limited to the conversion occurring on different reels so that the converted wild card symbols can be on the same "win line" as the original wild card symbol (see col. 1, lines 38-54). There is no suggestion in O'Halloran to convert symbols on the same reel to identical special symbols, as claimed in Claims 11 and 33, resulting in the converted symbols to not be on the same pay line as the original special symbol.

It is very significant in O'Halloran that the changed symbols only occur in the same pay line (on different reels) as the wild card since the changed symbols are combined with the original wild card symbol to create an enhanced symbol combination on the same pay line.

Applicant had previously pointed out that O'Halloran could not suggest to change symbols in the same **column** of the special symbol since such changed symbols are not in the same pay line as the special symbol.

The examiner relies on Bennett's Figs. 7a and 7b (described in col. 2, lines 27-33; and col. 5, lines 34-45) in the final office action to teach changing symbols in a column. However, Bennett only teaches in Figs. 7a and 7b to respin the reel. The symbols themselves on the reel do not change. Accordingly, Bennett could not suggest the claim limitation of "when the special symbol is displayed in a particular column, converting adjacent symbols in the same particular column to be identical to the special symbol, wherein the identical special symbols in the particular column are in different pay lines."

Therefore, the combination of O'Halloran and Bennett is respectfully submitted to be no more relevant than O'Halloran itself. Hence, the claims are believed to be patentable.

Should the Examiner have any questions or wish to make the claims clearer, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (408) 382-0480 x202.

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Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,

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